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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE
NEWS

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Nationwide On-line Retrieval System Announced for Toxicology Information

A nationwide, on-line information retrieval service giving environmental health scientists, clinicians, and other health professionals direct access from remote locations to NLM's extensive store of computerized toxicological/pharmacological information and data was publicly demonstrated for the first time at the annual meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association in Houston, April 23-26. The new system is called TOXICON, for "Toxicology Information Conversational On-line Network."

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According to Dr. Henry M. Kissman, NLM's Associate Director for Specialized Information Services, TOXICON is designed to respond more effectively to the information needs of health professionals working in pharmacology and toxicology as they relate to medicine, environmental pollution, and industrial or occupational health and safety.

Utilizing one of a wide choice of existing terminal devices connected to TOXICON through the telephone network established for the Library's MEDLINE system (*News*, Sept.-Oct. 1971, March 1972), a subscriber will be able to conduct an immediate search of the toxicology/pharmacology data bases compiled and maintained by the Library's Toxicology Information Program. These expanding data bases are a major store of published human and animal toxicity studies, adverse drug reactions, poisoning cases, effects of environmental chemicals or pollutants, and analytical methodology.

When the TOXICON service starts during the summer, it will contain these major bibliographic files: the *Toxicity Bibliography* (1968-present), which now contains about 50,000 citations; the abstracts which have appeared since 1966 in the journal, *Health Aspects of Pesticides Abstracts Bulletin* (HAPAB), produced by the Division of Pesticide Community Studies, Environmental Protection Agency; and some 100,000 abstracts from *Chemical-Biological Activities* (CBAC), 1965-present, a publication and tape service of Chemical Abstracts Services. *Health Aspects of Environmental Pollutants*, a new abstract journal (*News*, April 1972), will be introduced into the system as it is published. There are also plans to input the citations and indexing terms from the Toxicology Information Program's forthcoming *Drug Interaction Bibliography* as successive volumes appear.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Public Health Service
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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE
NEWS

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Eventually, TOXICON may consist of three types of files: text files, containing the whole text of articles or reviews; bibliographic files, with article citations, abstracts, indexes, and key words; and data files, encompassing data bases with specific numerical or verbal descripters.

"We hope," said Dr. Kissman, "to provide a broadly available service uncomplicated in operation, low in cost, and able to reduce greatly the time now spent in retrieving data supporting toxicology investigations." He added that TOXICON users will require no special computer know-how. They can be shown in a brief time how to operate the different typewriter-like terminals which interface with the network. User costs are expected to be moderate, and will include: rental or purchase of a terminal, a one-time sign-up charge for which the user will receive training, a small annual charge for updated training manuals, a newsletter, and -- during terminal use -- connect charges to the network and computer use charge. Some subscribers will have standard telephone charges to the nearest network entry point. Foreign exchanges and wide-area telephone service (WATS) apply to the use of TOXICON as they do to ordinary calls.

Informatics, Inc., a computer software and system company, will operate the service. For additional information, write to Informatics, Inc., 6000 Executive Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

Regents Meet

The Board of Regents of the National Library of Medicine convened for its forty-first meeting, March 27-28, 1972, at the Library's National Medical Audiovisual Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. William G. Anlyan, Vice President for Health Affairs, Duke University, and Regents Chairman, presided.

Dr. Kenneth M. Endicott, Director, Bureau of Health Manpower Education, NIH, described the major features of the Comprehensive Health Manpower Training Act and the Nurse Training Act of 1971. He emphasized, as relevant to NLM interests, a new grant program recently authorized to support training in educational techniques for qualified educators, and grants in computer technology as related to delivery of health care.

Following a welcome to Atlanta from Dr. David Sencer, Director of the Center for Communicable Disease Control, Dr. Martin M. Cummings, NLM Director, reported on the President's budget for the next fiscal year, stressing that it offered a real opportunity to introduce new technology on behalf of education, research, and health practice. He went on to report favorably on the progress being made

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MEDLINE Queried Via Satellite

Pulling together elements of three new NLM programs, Davis McCarn, Acting Associate Director for Science Communications and Computer and Engineering Services, arranged a search of MEDLINE citations via satellite.

The message was sent by Mr. Peter Stangl, Stanford Medical Librarian, from a terminal at Stanford to the satellite, requesting a search on the subject, "Vision Disorders in Newborn Infants." The query was received by the satellite and sent to the University of Washington, Seattle, then into the data communications network, and thus to the computer.

In answering the query, the flow was reversed, the computer sending the needed information, via satellite, to Stanford. A total of 52 citations were retrieved in reply to the query.

The three NLM programs on which the experiment was based are the MEDLINE service, which provides on-line interactive search of a computer-based store of over 400,000 citations to current biomedical literature; a national data communications network linking the MEDLINE data base to user terminals that can be reached by a local telephone call in over 35 cities in the U.S.; and the application of NASA's ATS-I satellite to the regular transmission of biomedical information, a service sponsored by the Library's Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications.

The satellite is presently being used by NLM to provide voice communication between medical centers in Alaska and outlying posts manned by native health aides. Phone lines on land often do not exist, and regular radio transmission is highly unpredictable and uncertain, because of atmospheric conditions.

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by the present contractor, System Development Corporation, toward completion of the emerging MEDLARS II.

The final subject reviewed by Dr. Cummings was NLM's international relations, with a description of the arrangements for the sharing of time, talent, and resources in acquisition and document exchange, provision of NLM services, and MEDLARS agreements.

One of the Regents, Mrs. Bernice Hetzner, President of the Medical Library Association, spoke briefly on the library community's response to the Williams and Wilkins copyright suit against the NIH Library and NLM. The American Library Association, Medical Library Association, and Association of Research Libraries have sent letters to their members advising them of the status of the case.

Dr. Henry M. Kissman then reported on the Toxicology Information Program, saying that the program should 1) create toxicology data bases with information taken from the scientific literature and from the files of cooperating governmental, academic, and industrial organizations; and 2) provide a variety of toxicology

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information services for the scientific community. He referred to the establishment of the Toxicology Information Response Center (TIRC) at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (*News*, April 1971), and described the services provided by TIP and TIRC as, generally, query response services, publications, and operation of an on-line information retrieval system, TOXICON (see page 1).

The afternoon of March 27 was devoted to a review of activities at the National Medical Audiovisual Center. Dr. Charles Bridgman, Director, explained the seven major program goals that have been developed by the Center. In priority order, they are: 1) clearinghouse -- a comprehensive effort to assemble, catalog, and disseminate instructional media, systems, facilities, and programs relevant to both basic and continuing health science education; 2) evaluation and acquisition -- identification, peer review, and assembling of data on related media; 3) distribution -- providing user access to the discrete relevant media collections and components; 4) advisory services -- assistance to and interchange with the health science community through site surveys, in-house consultations, and training programs; 5) training; 6) applied research -- compilation of state-of-the-art information on instructional technology and its application in innovative prototype efforts; and 7) media development -- establishing means and systems to develop prototype instructional media programs, learning systems, and environments, in conjunction with professional experts.

The Regents were addressed after dinner on March 27 by Dr. John McGovern, who spoke on "Humanism in Medicine -- An Audiovisual Interview with Wilburt C. Davison, Wilder Penfield and Emil Holman, the Three Living Rhodes Scholars of Sir William Osler."

The following morning Mr. Albert Feiner, Director of the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications, made a two-part presentation to the Regents on 1) progress made in implementing the report of the Association of American Medical Colleges concerning the roles of the Lister Hill Center (*J. Med. Educ.* 46 (7), Pt.2, 1971), and 2) the development of the ATS-F satellite communication experiments. Mr. Feiner reviewed the Center's progress in responding to recommendations from the Board of Regents' Priorities Review Committee (*News*, January 1972), concerning organization of a biomedical communications network to provide the mechanism for interinstitutional sharing and cooperation, and development of a clearinghouse for information on all aspects of technology in medicine.

The balance of the meeting was devoted to consideration of pending applications for grants and contracts, with the Board of Regents sitting in its capacity as the National Medical Libraries Assistance Advisory Board.

NLM Director Honored in Sweden

"Some Problems of Scientific Publications" is the title of the commencement address at the Karolinska Institut in Stockholm, to be given on June 1 by NLM Director Martin M. Cummings. Following the address, Dr. Cummings will be awarded an honorary degree of doctor of medicine by Professor Borje Uvnas, Dean of the Medical Faculty. The Rector of the Institute, Dr. Sune Bergstrom, will preside at the ceremonies.

MEDLARS Tools Available through NTIS

Within the last year, there has been a great increase in requests for a number of NLM publications that were developed primarily for use by MEDLARS staff. The great interest shown in these tools, as their existence has become known to the medical library community, seems to attest to their usefulness. Because of the cost and effort required to satisfy this outside demand, NLM has sought assistance in handling their distribution. The Library will no longer be able to honor direct requests for these publications, or for other NLM publications as they become available through NTIS.

The following NLM publications may be purchased from the National Technical Information Service, U. S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, Virginia 22151:

Accession No.	Publication Title	Paper Copy	Microfiche
PB-207 175	MEDLARS Indexing and Searching Aids *	$6.00	$.95
PB-207 176	Medical Subject Headings Tree Structures 1972	$6.00	$.95
PB-207 177	MEDLARS Training Program MEDLINE Training Syllabus	$3.00	$.95
PB-207 180	Medical Subject Headings Alphabetic List 1972	$6.00	$.95
PB-207 181	MEDLARS Indexing Manual	$6.00	$.95
PB-207 707	Permuted MeSH 1972	$6.00	$.95

In ordering, purchasers should be sure to give the accession number of each as well as the publication title.

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* Includes five items:
Hints for Index Medicus Users
Medical Subject Headings 1972 - New Main Headings
Alphabetic List of Provisional Headings in MEDLARS - 1972
Eponymous Syndromes - MEDLARS Indexing Instructions
Tumor Manual - MEDLARS Indexing Instructions
These five items are available only as a unit, and may not be purchased separately.

Dr. Ferguson Retires

On April 28, Dr. Malcolm S. Ferguson, Audiovisual Consultant at the National Library of Medicine, retired from Federal service after nearly 30 years. Formerly Chief of the NIH Medical Arts and Photography Branch, Dr. Ferguson has been most recently concerned with the evaluation of audiovisuals at NLM, and was responsible for the expansion of the Library's in-house audiovisual capability.

Dr. Ferguson had extensive experience with medical audiovisual materials -- with the U.S. Army in World War II, and later with the Public Health Service. In 1947 he joined the Communicable Disease Center, where he produced a number of films.

Dr. Ferguson received B.A. and M.A. degrees in zoology from the University of Western Ontario, and a Ph.D. in parasitology from the University of Illinois.

Dr. Ferguson expects to continue working in the field of medical communications. A gift of a camera case -- presented by his NLM co-workers at a farewell party in his honor -- should stand him in good stead in both his leisure and professional post-retirement activities.

Meetings Addressed by NLM Staff Members

Dr. Jaroslav Nemec, Specialist in Medical Jurisprudence, Reference Services Division, was invited to present a paper at the International Symposium on Society, Medicine and Law in Jerusalem, March 26-29. He spoke on "Forensic Medicine in the Slavic Countries."

Dr. Henry Kissman, Associate Director for Specialized Information Services, addressed the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association's Science Information Sub-Section, at its second annual meeting in Philadelphia, March 12-14; his topic was "An On-line Interactive Retrieval System for Toxicology Information" (see page 1).

Miss Susan Geddes, Senior Systems Analyst, Computer and Engineering Services, and a member of the Task Force on Automation of the Federal Library Committee, spoke on March 28 at a meeting of the Baltimore Chapter of the Special Libraries Association. She reported on the recently completed survey, "Automation and the Federal Library Community," and the "Handbook of Library Automation," prepared for the Federal Library Committee by System Development Corporation; she then outlined the future plans of the Task Force on Automation. Miss Geddes also chaired a "Workshop on Techniques and Evaluation for Library Automation" in Boston, April 19-20, sponsored by the Federal Library Committee.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Information Sciences of the Medical Sciences Division, National Research Council met on April 14 in Washington. Dr. Clifford A. Bachrach, Chief, Bibliographic Services Division, demonstrated MEDLINE to the group, and Mr. Stanley Jablonski, Head, Index Section, BSD, spoke on vocabulary construction.

"The Lister Hill Biomedical Network" was the topic of a talk by Mr. Albert Feiner, Director of the Center and Associate Director for Research and Development, presented on May 5 at the Symposium of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers in New York.

New Medical Library to be Dedicated in Texas

The new $3 million medical library of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston will be dedicated on June 6 at the time of the school's annual commencement. Dr. Harry H. Ransom of Austin, chancellor emeritus of the University of Texas System, will give the dedicatory address. On the following day, NLM Director Martin M. Cummings will speak during the Honors Convocation on "The Gold-Headed Cane as a Symbol of Continued Medical Education."

The library was built with the aid of a construction grant of $1.6 million from the National Library of Medicine, awarded under the provisions of the Medical Library Assistance Act.

Polish Scientist Visits NLM

During the week of April 10, Dr. Wlodzimierz Kurylowicz, Director of the State Institute of Hygiene in Warsaw, met with staff of the Library's International Programs Division (Extramural Programs) to discuss two NLM projects activated at his institute--a critical review on "Antibiotics" and an illustrated atlas on the ultrastructure of streptomycetes in the course of biosynthesis of antibiotics.

NLM Receives SBA Award

NLM Director Martin M. Cummings, M.D. accepts an achievement award presented to the Library for "cooperation and assistance to the Small Business Administration making possible attaining and exceeding the goals established for the President's Minority Business Development Program for fiscal year 1971." The award was presented on March 29 by James Hollis (l.), SBA's Procurement Center Representative.

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